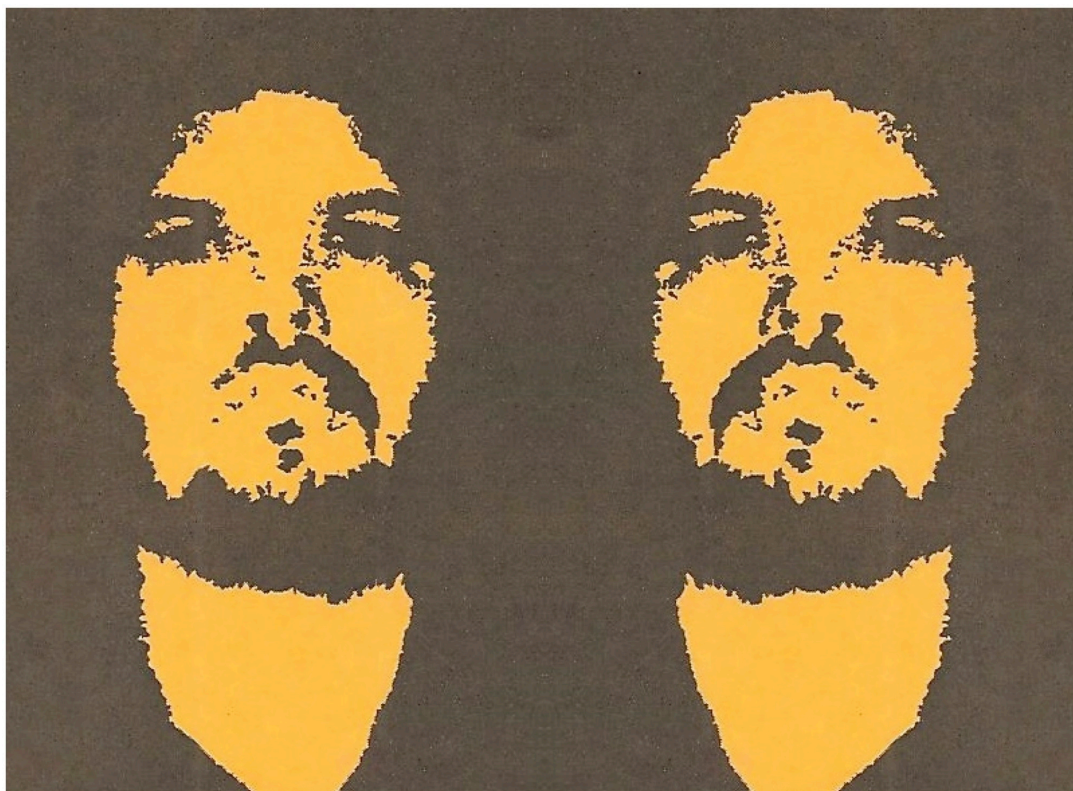


PERUSAL SCRIPT



Brothers

a play by J. Scott Bronson



Newport, ME

© 2010 by J. Scott Bronson
ALL RIGHTS RESERVED

CAUTION:
Professionals and amateurs are hereby warned that

BROTHERS

being fully protected under the copyright laws of the United States Of America, the British Empire, including the Dominion Of Canada, and the other countries of the Copyright Union, is subject to royalty. Anyone presenting the play without the express written permission of the Copyright owners and/or their authorized agent will be liable to the penalties provided by law.

A requisite number of script and music copies must be purchased from the Publisher and Royalty must be paid to the publisher for each and every performance before an audience whether or not admission is charged. A performance license must first be obtained from the publisher prior to any performance(s).

Federal Copyright Law -- 17 U.S.C. section 504 -- allows for a recovery of a minimum of \$250 and a maximum of \$50,000 for each infringement, plus attorney fees.

The professional and amateur rights to the performance of this play along with the lecturing, recitation, and public reading rights, are administered exclusively through ZION THEATRICALS without whose permission in writing no performance of it may be made. For all other rights inquiries may be made to the authors through ZION THEATRICALS Any adaptation or arrangement of this work without the author's written permission is an infringement of copyright. **Unauthorized duplication by any means is also an infringement.**

FOR PUBLIC PERFORMANCE RIGHTS YOU MUST APPLY TO THE PUBLISHER OR YOU ARE BREAKING THE LAW!

The possession of this SCRIPT whether bought or rented, does not constitute permission to perform the work herein contained, in public or in private, for gain or charity. Proper prior application must be made and license granted before a performance may be given. Copies of this SCRIPT and all other rehearsal materials may be bought and/or rented from:

ZION THEATRICALS
PO Box 536 Newport, ME 04953-0536
www.ziontheatricals.com
Printed in the United States Of America

Whenever this play is produced the following notice should appear in the program and on all advertisements under the producer's control: "Produced by special arrangement with Zion Theatricals, Newport, ME" In all programs and posters and in all advertisements under the producers control, the author's name shall be prominently featured under the title.

NOTE: Your contract with Zion Theatricals limits you to making copies of this document for persons directly connected with your production. Do not distribute outside of your cast and crew. Following your performance run you must destroy all photocopies, preferably by shredding them. If we sent you the document in printed format, you must return that document to us. if we provided you with an electronic PDF file, simply trash that on your computer so that it cannot be recovered. The electronic document may only be on ONE computer -- it may NOT be duplicated. This is also a part of your contract with Zion Theatricals.

PRODUCTION NOTES:

A reading of a shorter version of *Brothers* was first presented in the Brinton Black Box Theater in the Covey Center for the Arts in Provo, Utah April 13 & 20, 2009. Paige Afton Bronson handled the lights and sound. The brothers were read by:

Elwon Bakly and Dave Hanson

The first full production of *Brothers* was staged in the Brinton Black Box Theater March 11-27, 2010. Paige Afton Bronson was the stage manager and the tech operator. Lights were designed by Jeni McCall. The set was designed by J. Scott Bronson and Jeni McCall. The scenic artist was Lindy Dusenbery. It was directed by the author and, once again, the brothers were played by:

Elwon Bakly and Dave Hanson

CHARACTERS

While a quick glance through the script makes it obvious that there are two brothers—designated FIRSTBORN and BORNFIRST—it must be understood that these monikers are included simply for the ease of conducting rehearsals. These names should not appear in the program. And please do not refer to them as Brother #1 or Brother #2, or anything like unto it. In the program just say something like, “The Brothers are played by Tom Hanks and Denzel Washington.”¹ That way, if you want to, you can have the actors learn both parts so that they can alternate roles from night to night, or week to week or whatever. Then, neither one of them is in any real danger of developing a savior or a devil complex.

SETTINGS

ACT ONE -- a heaven -- page 1

ACT TWO -- a wilderness -- page 14

ACT THREE -- a garden -- page 20

ACT FOUR -- an abyss -- page 32

A Note on Color-blind Casting

I am for it.

Let me explain that a little. My support for this has nothing to do with being politically correct. Rather, I exhort you to consider color-blind casting because I think the roles should go to the actors best suited to perform them. I would hate to think that some director didn't cast someone simply because they didn't think the audience would accept the idea of an occidental and an oriental (or any other combination of races) as being blood kin. I believe (most) theatre-going people are sophisticated enough to get beyond that type of thinking. At least I hope so.

And a Note About Punctuation

Actors performing or reading this play should pay special attention to the punctuation idiosyncrasies I employ. Perhaps a brief explanation is in order:

Ellipses (...) indicate a brief moment of clarifying or reconsideration of the idea in process.

M-dashes (--) indicate an interruption, usually by another person, though it is possible for one to interrupt one's self.

It is possible, also, that you may find these indicators used in conjunction with one another. I leave it to you to figure out what that means. And, whether or not they are followed by a period or a comma should also be a consideration in your interpretation of the dialogue.

¹ Wouldn't that be awesome?

For **Brian Kershisnik**
for many wonderful paintings and
one late night conversation with lots of ideas

Act I
War in Heaven

(The BROTHERS enter. There is an air of barely suppressed excitement between them. Pause.)

FIRSTBORN: Well.

BORNFIRST: Yes indeed. Well. Well, well.

FIRSTBORN: So, what do you think?

BORNFIRST: I think it's ... remarkable.

FIRSTBORN: Yes.

BORNFIRST: Truly remarkable.

FIRSTBORN: I couldn't agree more. It's so—, so much more ... more than I thought it was going to be.

BORNFIRST: What do you mean?

(Beat.)

FIRSTBORN: I'm not sure what I mean ... exactly. Only that—, from what little we knew before, I couldn't have—, my imagination ...

BORNFIRST: Didn't quite see the scope of it?

FIRSTBORN: No—, I mean ... yes. You are correct. My imagination wasn't that grand.

BORNFIRST: And now?

FIRSTBORN: My imagination is growing.

BORNFIRST: I know the feeling.

FIRSTBORN: You feel as I do?

BORNFIRST: Well, I don't know exactly. I'm not a mind reader, but I think it may be similar ... even if I'm not as excitable as you.

(BORNFIRST smiles at his brother, who suddenly stops in his jittery tracks and laughs, lightly, at himself.)

FIRSTBORN: I suppose I am a bit ... nervous.

BORNFIRST: Just a bit.

(Pause.)

FIRSTBORN: I suppose I'm a little confused is all.

BORNFIRST: About what?

FIRSTBORN: Why we're here. Why Father asked us to wait here. Apart from all the others.

(FIRSTBORN sees a look pass through his brother's expression.)

What is it?

BORNFIRST: Nothing.

(Beat.)

FIRSTBORN: It's something.

BORNFIRST: No. Really.

FIRSTBORN: I know you, Brother.

BORNFIRST: *(Amused)* Do you?

FIRSTBORN: Yes. You know I do.

BORNFIRST: And just what is it you know, little brother?

FIRSTBORN: That there are layers of meaning in every brooding glance from those eyes.

BORNFIRST: Hm.

Brothers by *J. Scott Bronson*

FIRSTBORN: You see? I do know you.

BORNFIRST: Perhaps.

(Beat.)

And I know you.

FIRSTBORN: You think so?

BORNFIRST: Oh, I know so.

FIRSTBORN: Dare I ask?

(BORNFIRST laughs.)

BORNFIRST: You have no reason to fear. I mean your soul no harm.

FIRSTBORN: One can't be too sure what with that brooding face.

BORNFIRST: All right. Here is what I know. That you will torture a thought, or an idea ... or a glance ... until what meager meaning may have been lurking there will dissipate into mere fragments with no cohesion.

And thus—no power or purpose. That is what I know.

FIRSTBORN: Well.

BORNFIRST: Sang the right note, did I?

FIRSTBORN: Huh.

BORNFIRST: I did.

FIRSTBORN: Perhaps. And ... so?

BORNFIRST: What?

FIRSTBORN: The brooding glance?

BORNFIRST: Yes. Well. A thought, merely.

FIRSTBORN: It looked like more than a mere thought.

BORNFIRST: An idea then.

FIRSTBORN: Ah. Imagination.

BORNFIRST: Yes, that's it. Imagination.

FIRSTBORN: What were you imagining?

BORNFIRST: *(With a smile)* Many things, little brother. Many things.

FIRSTBORN: The foremost being ... ?

(Beat.)

BORNFIRST: *(Gesturing to where they entered from)* A good plan. An amazing plan—, a remarkable plan. But ...

(FIRSTBORN is attentive.)

Also ... horrifying.

FIRSTBORN: Horrifying? Really? In what way, do you think?

BORNFIRST: Well, for he who takes the center place of things ... there will be terrible moments of anguish and sorrow.

FIRSTBORN: Don't you think, though, that those moments will also be transcendent and ... and ... well, glorious?

BORNFIRST: Oh, yes, of course. Undoubtedly. But still ...

FIRSTBORN: You can do it, Brother. I have faith in you.

BORNFIRST: Thank you. That means a great deal.

FIRSTBORN: More importantly, Father has faith in you.

BORNFIRST: Yes. I know. And—actually—that is what's most frightening about it.

FIRSTBORN: How so?

Brothers by *J. Scott Bronson*

BORNFIRST: How would you feel if you disappointed Father in such an important matter?

FIRSTBORN: Indeed.

(Beat.)

You fear you shall disappoint?

BORNFIRST: Well ... of course. I must be honest with myself. Yes, I do fear it. But, I hope that I will not.

And I feel ... certain that my hope is stronger than my fear.

FIRSTBORN: How our imaginations can work on us.

BORNFIRST: Yes, yes. It is difficult to settle the mind at times.

FIRSTBORN: How else does your imagination torment you?

BORNFIRST: Still peering into that expression of mine? Was it so enigmatic?

FIRSTBORN: You know me, Brother, I'm a seeker of knowledge.

BORNFIRST: I think your imagination is working on you now.

FIRSTBORN: I saw something.

BORNFIRST: You think you saw something.

FIRSTBORN: I fear that I saw something, and I hope that I did not.

BORNFIRST: And it concerns you for some reason?

FIRSTBORN: It does.

BORNFIRST: Why?

FIRSTBORN: I'm not sure exactly.

BORNFIRST: You fear that what you saw might have been something ... dangerous, perhaps?

FIRSTBORN: Yes. And I feel ... certain that my fear will turn out to be stronger than my hope.

BORNFIRST: Hm?

FIRSTBORN: What?

BORNFIRST: You've always been good at that, haven't you?

FIRSTBORN: Good at what?

BORNFIRST: Being clever.

FIRSTBORN: How do you mean?

BORNFIRST: Turning a person's words back around on them. Changing the meanings. The intent.

FIRSTBORN: No. Not changing them, Brother. Not changing them at all.

BORNFIRST: What then?

FIRSTBORN: Well, if anything, I may be exposing the meaning. Revealing the intent.

BORNFIRST: Oh, really. Is that how you see it?

FIRSTBORN: *(Pause.)* It is.

BORNFIRST: You see things so ... purely, don't you?

FIRSTBORN: I try to.

BORNFIRST: See the glory instead of the ... pain.

FIRSTBORN: See the glory in the pain.

BORNFIRST: That's dangerous, Brother.

FIRSTBORN: Dangerous how?

BORNFIRST: You miss ... important matters that way.

FIRSTBORN: Such as ...

BORNFIRST: The flaws.

FIRSTBORN: Flaws?

BORNFIRST: Yes.

Brothers by *J. Scott Bronson*

FIRSTBORN: We're still talking about Father's plan?

BORNFIRST: Yes.

FIRSTBORN: Flaws.

BORNFIRST: You don't see them.

FIRSTBORN: I confess that I do not. As far as I can tell, there are no flaws in Father's plan.

BORNFIRST: Opportunities then.

FIRSTBORN: Opportunities?

BORNFIRST: To improve upon it.

FIRSTBORN: Improve on Father's plan?

BORNFIRST: Yes—

FIRSTBORN: I don't think Father meant for us to question the—

BORNFIRST: Of course he did. He clothed our minds with spirits just so that we could question. To give us more to imagine and wonder at. He gave us something to use our minds on and now he's going to give us more— so much more, Brother, that—that ... most of Father's family will never have the imagination to see the scope and the depth of it.

(Beat.)

Please, Brother, tell me that you are not among that crowd. Assure me, here and now, that you have the capacity and vision to comprehend this plan. Don't leave me alone in this. Use your mind. Question.

(Pause.)

FIRSTBORN: I don't think Father meant for us to question—challenge—the elements of the plan—whether or not the plan is well-planned. I think—wait—I think ... Now I think he means for us to discuss how we will—how you and I—will fit into the plan.

BORNFIRST: That's already settled.

FIRSTBORN: ... Possibly. Either one of us could lose our place. Or both of us.

BORNFIRST: Or neither.

FIRSTBORN: True. That is true.

BORNFIRST: Has it occurred to you that perhaps Father has purposefully placed flaws in the plan to see if we could find them?

FIRSTBORN: No. And I seriously doubt that he would. When has that ever been his method?

BORNFIRST: We're on the cusp of a new age, Brother. New strategies are called for.

FIRSTBORN: Strategies. You have a unique outlook, Brother. I'll give you that.

BORNFIRST: And that upsets you?

FIRSTBORN: Well ... yes. It does. It is disturbing.

BORNFIRST: No, Brother, no. Listen. Listen. Now is the time to be thinking ahead of things. Peering down the path.

FIRSTBORN: I agree. But you're ahead of yourself. You're peering too far down the path, seeing things that are not there. Rather than you taking hold of your imagination, your imagination has taken hold of you, and I fear that you are actually on the wrong path.

BORNFIRST: No, Brother—

FIRSTBORN: This is the path that leads to disappointment.

BORNFIRST: Whose disappointment?

FIRSTBORN: Yours. Father's. Mine. Everyone's.

BORNFIRST: Ridiculous.

FIRSTBORN: Brother, there is not a single member of Father's vast family who would not sorrow at the loss

Brothers by *J. Scott Bronson*

of the great son of the morning.

BORNFIRST: Loss? You— You think that I'm— Going to fall?

(Pause.)

That's a cruel thought, Brother.

FIRSTBORN: What? No—. I meant no—

BORNFIRST: That's not what you meant, then?

FIRSTBORN: Yes, but only as—

BORNFIRST: I'm hurt, Brother.

FIRSTBORN: Hurt. Yet, I meant no harm.

BORNFIRST: Really. How did you imagine I'd feel after an accusation—

FIRSTBORN: Not an accusation, Brother. A warning.

(Pause.)

I have nothing but your best interests in mind.

BORNFIRST: I'm not sure that I can believe you, Brother.

FIRSTBORN: Why wouldn't you?

BORNFIRST: I don't believe that I can trust your motive.

FIRSTBORN: What other purpose could I have in offering a voice of warning, than to try to ensure your success in Father's plan?

BORNFIRST: My success? You're trying to infect my mind with doubts so that I will fail.

FIRSTBORN: That's not true.

BORNFIRST: You believe that it's not true or you wouldn't be able to say it. But it is true. You harbor a deep envy for me. I've seen it in you before and it's stronger now than it's ever been.

FIRSTBORN: Brother, listen to me—please listen—, truly, you are deluded in this.

(BORNFIRST reacts negatively.)

Do not scoff. I can not say this with any more truth, sincerity and love ... I pray for your welfare. I hope for your success.

(Pause.)

BORNFIRST: Thank you. I'm sure that you do.

FIRSTBORN: I do. I do.

BORNFIRST: I see that. I'm sorry that I doubted you.

FIRSTBORN: It doesn't matter. I don't care about that as long as you understand that I'm on your side in this.

I'll support you.

BORNFIRST: We'll see.

FIRSTBORN: Brother—

BORNFIRST: You're naive.

FIRSTBORN: Brother—!

BORNFIRST: Naive!

(Pause.)

The Kingdom is not as simple as you imagine it.

FIRSTBORN: I know that there are complexities in the plan—stop—

(Beat.)

Yes, the plan is complex. But it is not complicated.

BORNFIRST: Ah. You see me as a complication, then.

FIRSTBORN: I'm beginning to.

Brothers by *J. Scott Bronson*

BORNFIRST: Again ... I'm hurt.

(Beat.)

However ... That's not what I meant by simple. Here's your problem, Brother--, you see the complexities in Father's plan, but you do not see the complexities in Father.

(Beat.)

I saw that look. Trust me, I know what I'm talking about. Father is deeper than you give him credit.

FIRSTBORN: In what way?

BORNFIRST: He wants us to do what he could not.

FIRSTBORN: And what is that?

BORNFIRST: Improve upon the plan.

(Pause.)

FIRSTBORN: I do not see a way to do that.

BORNFIRST: Of course you don't. You're too simple-minded.

FIRSTBORN: Now I'm hurt.

BORNFIRST: No you're not

FIRSTBORN: But I should be.

BORNFIRST: Let me rephrase--

(Beat.)

You stop thinking too soon. As soon as you think you understand something, you stop probing. You look no further.

(Beat.)

There is another level beyond understanding.

FIRSTBORN: Is there?

BORNFIRST: Comprehension.

FIRSTBORN: I see. And what is it that you ... comprehend ... about Father's plan?

(Pause.)

BORNFIRST: Everyone can be saved.

(Beat.)

FIRSTBORN: That's ... not exactly ... an insight.

BORNFIRST: Right. I suppose, according to your simple understanding of the phrase, yes, all of Father's family can be saved by the plan as he has just outlined it. But they won't be saved--most of them even--because they are weak. Too weak--much too weak--to withstand the passions that will take hold of their bodies. They will fail the test. And they will be lost.

FIRSTBORN: Yes. Unfortunate, but true.

BORNFIRST: But it doesn't have to be that way.

FIRSTBORN: What other way, then, does your comprehension reveal to you?

BORNFIRST: I can save them all. I can make it so that not one soul shall be lost.

(Beat.)

FIRSTBORN: No, you can't.

BORNFIRST: Yes. I can. I can.

FIRSTBORN: That can only be accomplished by setting aside a key--the key element of Father's plan.

BORNFIRST: Well ... yes.

FIRSTBORN: And that idea doesn't disturb you at all?

BORNFIRST: No. Not really. Should it?

Brothers by *J. Scott Bronson*

FIRSTBORN: How would you like it if your freedom to choose was stripped from you?

BORNFIRST: In order to gain exaltation? I think I could endure it.

FIRSTBORN: You would feel cheated.

BORNFIRST: Only throughout my mortal probation, which—let’s face it—is an extremely brief period.

FIRSTBORN: But you would have proved nothing.

(BORNFIRST shrugs: “Yeah? And what’s your point?”)

Your character would remain untested. You would never really know what greatness you might have been capable of.

BORNFIRST: Brother, let us stop speaking hypothetically.

FIRSTBORN: All right.

(Beat.)

You can not take their agency from them. Father’s children must be tested.

BORNFIRST: I don’t think so. At least, not so literally, the way that you believe it. I think all that is required is that his greatest children be tested. Not the entire brood.

FIRSTBORN: So ... who are Father’s greatest?

BORNFIRST: Come now. Let’s not be coy.

(Pause.)

I mean us of course. We two.

FIRSTBORN: Just the two of us?

BORNFIRST: A few others, but, basically ... yes. Who else matters?

FIRSTBORN: A great many. All.

BORNFIRST: Yes. Of course. Once the plan has— once the proper course of the plan has been initiated.

FIRSTBORN: And you see this moment—, here, now—, as our test. You believe we are here to decide on something that has already been determined.

BORNFIRST: Nothing is “determined,” Brother.

FIRSTBORN: No?

BORNFIRST: No.

FIRSTBORN: Until we determine it.

BORNFIRST: Yes! Exactly.

(Pause.)

FIRSTBORN: So, naturally, if I disagree then I have failed the test. As you understand it.

BORNFIRST: I’m sorry, Brother, but ... yes.

(Pause.)

FIRSTBORN: Then I have failed.

(Pause.)

BORNFIRST: Please tell me that this is not true.

FIRSTBORN: Brother—

BORNFIRST: No. Why can you not see this? It is so clear.

FIRSTBORN: We can not take their agency from them.

BORNFIRST: Well—, no. Of course not. It won’t be taken.

FIRSTBORN: But, you said—

BORNFIRST: They will give it up. Of their own accord.

(Pause.)

FIRSTBORN: Well, you have succeeded in confusing me.

Brothers by *J. Scott Bronson*

BORNFIRST: That is not my intent.

FIRSTBORN: I'm not sure I believe that.

BORNFIRST: What confuses you?

FIRSTBORN: You label something as new and innovative something that is already an intrinsic element of the plan.

BORNFIRST: Which is?

FIRSTBORN: That Father's children will have to sacrifice their wills in order to trigger the plan's effect in their lives.

BORNFIRST: Yes. But, as the plan is now, the decision to give up one's will to Father's—a choice they can reject, by the way—

FIRSTBORN: Of course. That's the whole point—

BORNFIRST: But the choice is offered to them too late in the process. Too many of them will be unable to make the correct choice.

FIRSTBORN: Which is their right—

BORNFIRST: So, let's give them another choice.

FIRSTBORN: What choice?

BORNFIRST: When to make the choice.

FIRSTBORN: Talk about turning things around. This isn't making any sense.

BORNFIRST: You know what I'm talking about.

(Pause.)

FIRSTBORN: Yes. I do. Unfortunately.

(BORNFIRST draws near to his brother, a hopeful expression inviting complicity.)

When is it, then, that you think Father should offer the choice to surrender my will?

BORNFIRST: Now. Before we go into the world.

(FIRSTBORN is bewildered for a moment.)

FIRSTBORN: But, that changes the entire plan ... completely.

BORNFIRST: Yes!

FIRSTBORN: The whole point of the plan is to see what we will choose ... in the world.

BORNFIRST: No. No ... I disagree. The point of the plan is to find out what we really want.

FIRSTBORN: ... Yes.

BORNFIRST: And we all want to come home.

FIRSTBORN:... Yes.

BORNFIRST: So, let's choose it now.

FIRSTBORN: But that proves nothing.

BORNFIRST: It proves our love and devotion to Father—

FIRSTBORN: But it will mean nothing.

BORNFIRST: *(In a sudden and fleeting rage)* It will mean everything to us.

(Pause.)

FIRSTBORN: How?

BORNFIRST: Imagine the reward.

FIRSTBORN: I know the reward.

BORNFIRST: If that were true, then you would understand what it is that I'm trying to share with you. You would reach out with me and take hold of what is waiting out there for us.

FIRSTBORN: What is that?

Brothers by *J. Scott Bronson*

BORNFIRST: Glory.
(*Pause.*)

FIRSTBORN: Brother, we can not take that glory upon us. It can only be given. Wait—. Let me speak. You know that I am right. I know that you know. You are deceiving yourself. And you may end up deceiving many others. You are greatly admired. We all look up to you. Please do not do this.

(*Pause.*)

BORNFIRST: You are the one who is deceived, little brother. Though we came to this stage of life at nearly the same moment, the fact that I preceded you seems now to hold a compelling significance.

FIRSTBORN: Is that so?

BORNFIRST: Oh yes.
(*Pause.*)

You are weak. You haven't the strength of intellect or will to see that Father wants us to take his place as the saviors of his children. You, as the father of all living. And me as the redeemer of their souls.

FIRSTBORN: What's to redeem if their wills are not their own?

BORNFIRST: True. That will render the atonement a mere formality. But it will be necessary for them to see so that they will know to whom they must offer their obeisance—

FIRSTBORN: Father—

BORNFIRST: Me!

FIRSTBORN: You.

BORNFIRST: Me. I am, after all, the Firstborn of the father.

FIRSTBORN: You were born first, yes. But, Firstborn is a title. It must be earned. Like Father's glory, it must be given. You can not take it upon you.

BORNFIRST: Wrong, Brother. I will take it. Because it is mine.

FIRSTBORN: Wrong. It is Father's to give. To whom he will.
(*Pause.*)

BORNFIRST: If not to me, then who?

FIRSTBORN: To whom he will.

BORNFIRST: To you? Is that what you think? You imagine that you can take my place?

FIRSTBORN: No. Of course not. Your place can not be taken. Only given.

BORNFIRST: To you?

FIRSTBORN: To whom Father will.
(*Pause.*)

BORNFIRST: I will fight you.

FIRSTBORN: There is no need for that.

BORNFIRST: Oh, but there is. I will not let anyone—you or Father—take from me what is rightfully mine.

FIRSTBORN: If you pursue this course, it will not be taken, you will be giving it away.

BORNFIRST: (*Laughing*) Oh, yes. I was right. You are clever with words, aren't you?

FIRSTBORN: Call it clever if you like. I merely speak the truth.

BORNFIRST: Brother, you need to learn the difference between what is actually true, and what you merely believe to be true.

FIRSTBORN: Then teach me, Brother. What is the difference?
(*Pause.*)

You have no answer?

BORNFIRST: The difference is in what I believe to be true.

Brothers by *J. Scott Bronson*

FIRSTBORN: Brother, I beg you, please do not follow this dangerous course.

BORNFIRST: Better that you should beg me for mercy.

(Pause.)

FIRSTBORN: Well. A threat, is it.

BORNFIRST: A promise.

FIRSTBORN: Tell me.

BORNFIRST: That if you do not follow me in this course—this course that you call dangerous, but that I know to be true—when the time comes— when the world has been rolled up and given to Father for judgement, you will find yourself unworthy. On the outside of the law.

(Beat.)

And you will no longer be my brother.

(Pause.)

FIRSTBORN: My brother. All of this will be true. But you are the one who will be outside of the law. You are the one who will be the enemy of heaven.

(Beat.)

But, you will always be my brother.

(Pause.)

BORNFIRST: The Firstborn of Father's children.

FIRSTBORN: No. Born first.

(Blackout.)

TEN pages in Act II

SEVEN pages in Act III

FIVE pages in ACT IV

Brothers: A Review March 21, 2010 By [Bored in Vernal](#)

What if — as well as a description of birth order and an indicator of hierarchy — the appellation “firstborn” was also a title? Could the Heavenly Father assign this role to any of his children? This is a question confronted by the audience of “Brothers,” a new play which opened at the Covey Center for the Arts in Provo on March 11th. The play runs through next weekend, March 25, 26, and 27, and I encourage your attendance after I went to see it on Friday. The playwright and director, J. Scott Bronson, intends it as part of a trilogy of plays, the first of which, *Stones*, won the Association for Mormon Letters 2001 best drama.

“Brothers” is a retelling of the story of two of the foremost personalities in the heavenly realms — Jesus and Lucifer. The two are not named in the play, but call each other “brother.” Bronson’s striking script is never overstated, and depends upon the intelligence and familiarity of the audience with Mormon and scriptural themes to make connections. I very much enjoyed this subtlety, which allowed the story to unfold without announcing what was happening or locating where the action was taking place, but let the viewers discover it on their own.

Bronson is playful with Mormon theology in this work, never straying from the bounds of LDS orthodoxy, but sometimes approaching uncomfortable ambiguities commonly found in Mormonism. It was especially fascinating to follow Bronson’s ruminations on the Plan of Salvation presented by his Satan character as he expounded upon his reasoning for rejecting the plan and his ideas for “improving” it. Another potent scene again involved Satan mocking humanity’s constant querying about the presence of suffering in the world:

“Why, why, why?” ...mortals waste so much time on the most pathetic questions.

“Why does it have to be this way?” It doesn’t HAVE to be this way, it just IS!

“Why did Mommy have to die?” Why WOULDN’T she die? Everybody dies.

“Why is the sky blue?” Who CARES?!

“Why, why, why?” WHY NOT?? Is there anything more pathetic?

The symbolism in the play was elegant — from the stage set to the four simple and beautiful centerpieces changed with each scene, to the understated change in costume done by removing an outer coat.

... (Comments about the performances, not the play, have been excised)

I found the play an engrossing treatment of a uniquely Mormon theology of the relationship between Jesus and his brother, Lucifer. It might give further ammunition to evangelicals who decry this aspect of our doctrine, but I applaud the exploration and am convinced that it will be enjoyable and thought-provoking to both serious and casual purveyors of Mormonism, as well as those with an LDS background.

Brothers by *J. Scott Bronson*



The actors answering questions following Friday's showing of "Brothers"